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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/826,684	04/16/2004	Hugues F. Malandain	17116-004001	9582
26181	7590	09/12/2007	EXAMINER	
FISH & RICHARDSON P.C. PO BOX 1022 MINNEAPOLIS, MN 55440-1022			ARAJ, MICHAEL J	
ART UNIT		PAPER NUMBER		
		3733		
MAIL DATE		DELIVERY MODE		
09/12/2007		PAPER		

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

<b>Office Action Summary</b>	<b>Application No.</b>	<b>Applicant(s)</b>
	10/826,684	MALANDAIN, HUGUES F.
	<b>Examiner</b>	<b>Art Unit</b>
	Michael J. Araj	3733

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --  
**Period for Reply**

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

#### Status

- 1) Responsive to communication(s) filed on 6/18/07
- 2a) This action is FINAL.                    2b) This action is non-final.
- 3) Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

#### Disposition of Claims

- 4) Claim(s) 1-43 is/are pending in the application.
  - 4a) Of the above claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are allowed.
- 6) Claim(s) 1-27, 31-36 and 38-44 is/are rejected.
- 7) Claim(s) 28-30 and 37 is/are objected to.
- 8) Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

#### Application Papers

- 9) The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) The drawing(s) filed on 18 June 2007 is/are: a) accepted or b) objected to by the Examiner.  
 Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).  
 Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

#### Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
  - a) All    b) Some \* c) None of:
    1. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
    2. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. \_\_\_\_\_.
    3. Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

\* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

#### Attachment(s)

1) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)	4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413)
2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)	Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____.
3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08)	5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____.	6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____.

## DETAILED ACTION

### *Drawings*

The drawings were received on June 18, 2007. These drawings are accepted.

### ***Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102***

The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

Claims 1-7, 10-13, 16, 20-24, 31-36 and 38-44 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Bernhardt et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,591,166).

Bernhardt et al. disclose an elongate plate support element with a top portion and a bottom portion having a bottom surface and one or more apertures passing therethrough that spans two or more vertebrae (Fig. 1). The bottom surface includes a receiver configured to receive a plurality of anchor assemblies wherein the anchor assemblies include a means for locking the anchor assembly to the bottom portion of the support element. The means for locking includes a locking aperture. Also disclosed is a base (pedicle screw) having a head and a means for locking the base to the anchor assembly, such that when assembled, the anchor assembly does not pass through the support element. (**See Figure 1 below**) The base is comprised of a base head wherein the base head is movably disposed within the anchor assembly. The base head is consisting of a polyaxial connector and can be locked in a desired position.

One or more apertures have dimensional configuration providing access to the base and the means for locking the base to the anchor assembly though the top portion of the support element, wherein the head of the base for the anchor assembly does not pass through the support element. The apertures (14), as seen in Fig. 1 of '166, provide this access. The anchor assembly can have a 90-degree twist on configuration depending on its application. The receiver is integrally disposed and attached within the bottom surface of the bottom portion of the support element having a configuration of a slot. The receiver or access ports spans the length of the bottom surface and is comprised of two closed ends. The means for locking the anchor assembly to the support element includes a setscrew (28) disposed within the locker aperture of the nut (70), wherein the screw and locker aperture are threaded.

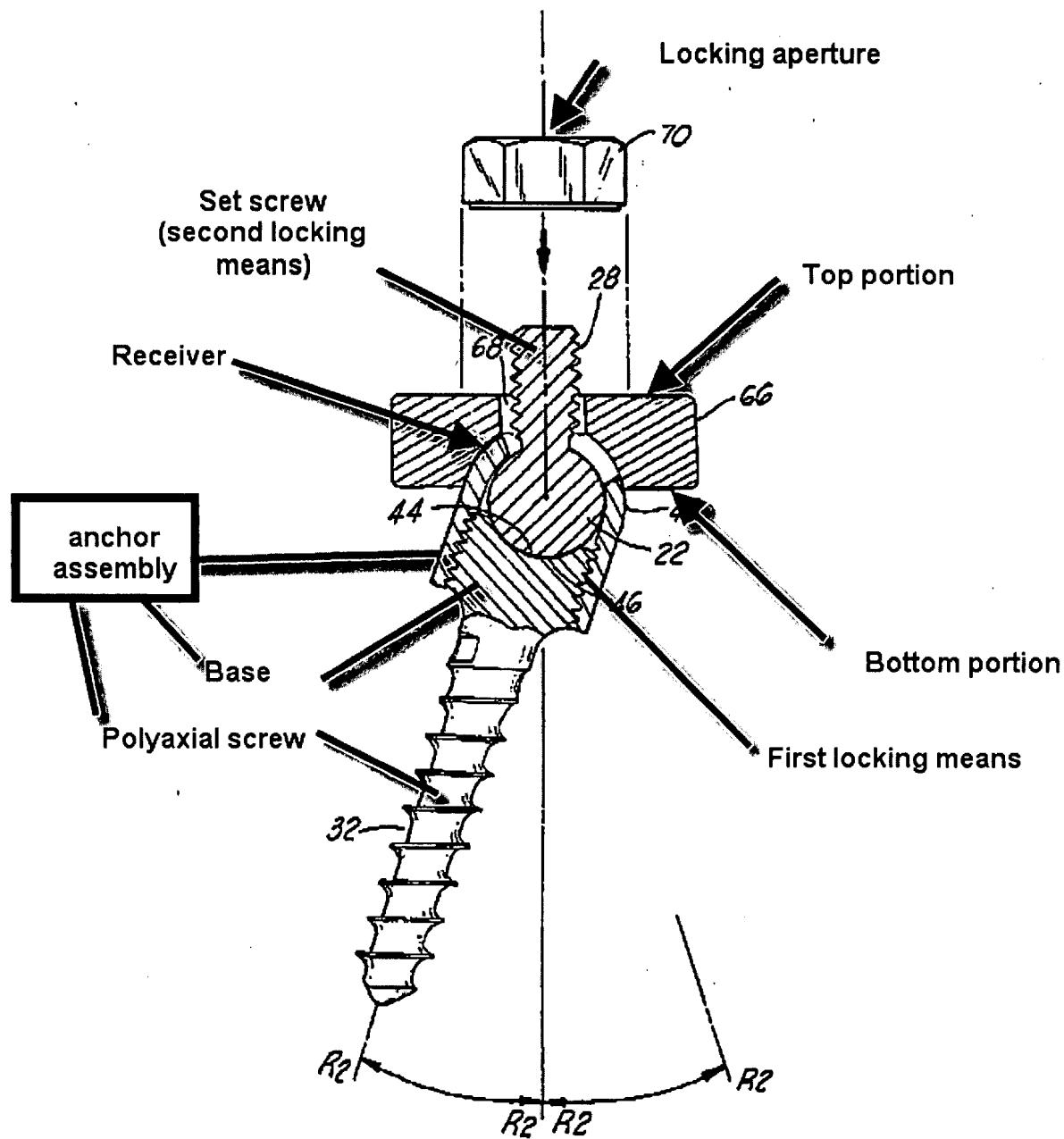


Figure 1 (taken from '166)

Bernhardt et al. also disclose a methods of implanting a plurality of anchor assemblies having bases into the bone with a first and second locking means (see Figure 1 above), connectively positioning a support element with a receiver, locking the bases within the anchor assemblies and locking the anchor assemblies within the support element receiver, where the anchor assemblies do not pass through the support element. The support element is disposed within a body location such as subcutaneous fat layer of the spine. It also can be viewed that the support element is disposed external to the body when the surgery is taking place.

***Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103***

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

Claims 8, 9, 26 and 27 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Bernhardt et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,591,166).

Bernhardt et al. disclose the claimed invention except for the support element and the anchor assembly being made of titanium. It would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made these pieces with titanium since it is an obvious type of biocompatible material as already stated in the document, and since it has been held to be within the general skill of a worker in the art

to select a known material on the basis of its suitability for the intended use as a matter of obvious design choice. In re Leshin, 125 USPQ 416.

Claims 14, 15, 18, 19 and 25 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Bernhardt et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,591,166) further in view of Morrison et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,315,779).

Bernhardt et al. disclose the claimed invention except for the receiver having a t-slot configuration or having its ends having a combination of closed and opened ends. Morrison et al. disclose a T-slot configuration as well as variations of the ends in order to better place the anchor assemblies at multiple locations desired. Having closed or opened ends would be best suited for a case by case basis. It would have been obvious to one skilled in the art at the time the invention was made to have created the device of Bernhardt et al. with a T-slot in view of Morrison et al., in order to have a better guided receiving slot to place have the anchor assemblies in specific locations.

#### ***Allowable Subject Matter***

Claims 28-30 and 37 objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

***Response to Arguments***

Applicant's arguments with respect to claims 1, 4, 14, 38 and 44 have been considered but are moot in view of the new ground(s) of rejection.

***Conclusion***

Applicant's amendment necessitated the new ground(s) of rejection presented in this Office action. Accordingly, **THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL**. See MPEP § 706.07(a). Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

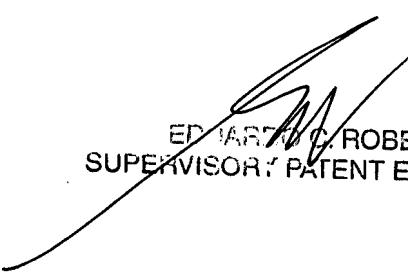
A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire THREE MONTHS from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within TWO MONTHS of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the THREE-MONTH shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than SIX MONTHS from the date of this final action.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Michael J. Araj whose telephone number is 571-272-5963. The examiner can normally be reached on M-F 8am-5pm.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Eduardo Robert can be reached on 571-272-4719. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

  
MJA

  
EDUARDO C. ROBERT  
SUPERVISORY PATENT EXAMINER